

REMARKS

Claims 18 and 28 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced with these amendments, all of which are supported in the application as originally filed. Claims 5, 22 - 27, and 29 - 31 have been cancelled from the application without prejudice (and Claims 1 - 4 and 6 - 17 were previously cancelled from the application without prejudice). Claims 18 - 21 and 28 are now in the application.

Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by the claims as presented prior to this Preliminary Amendment is not patentable, and claim amendments and cancellations made in the present application are directed toward facilitating expeditious prosecution of the application and allowance of the currently-presented claims at an early date. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue claims, including the subject matter encompassed by the claims as previously presented and additional claims, in one or more continuing applications.

I. Restriction Requirement

Paragraphs 1 - 4 of the Office Action dated March 19, 2009 (hereinafter, “the Office Action”) state that the application contains three distinct groups of claims, and that a restriction must therefore be made. Applicants hereby elect the claims identified in the Office Action as “Group II” (being all of Claims 18 - 21 and 28) for prosecution in the present application. The claims of Group I (being all of Claims 5, 22 - 27, and 29) and Group III (being all of Claims 30 - 31) have been cancelled from the application without prejudice.

II. Conclusion

The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw the restriction requirement. Applicants request examination of the claims as now presented, and allowance thereof, at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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